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DE RUEHTH #1693/01 3451107  
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1213  
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0059  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 001693

SIPDIS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA  
AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/11

TAGS: [PHSA](#) [KPIR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: PIRACY: GREECE WANTS CGPCS CHAIR, WILL CONSIDER NY  
DECLARATION CAVEAT

REF: A.) 12/7/09 COCKRELL-MAGGI EMAIL, B.) ATHENS 1611, C.) ATHENS  
1655, D.) ATHENS 1599

CLASSIFIED BY: Deborah A. McCarthy, Deputy Chief of Mission; REASON:  
1.4(B), (D)

[11](#). (U) This cable contains an action request, please see paragraph  
[16](#).

[12](#). (C) SUMMARY. The MFA formally requests to chair a future Plenary of the Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), MFA D1 Directorate Head Franciscos Verros and Counselor Dimitris Papandreou told PolCouns and Pol-Mil Chief during a meeting at the MFA's request December 10. The Greeks wish to chair the sixth or the seventh CGPCS Plenary following the fifth Plenary that will be chaired by Norway on January 28, and asked to know which other nations are have expressed interest or are being considered. Verros also stated that no recent staffing had been done in the MFA on signing the New York Declaration on best practices for merchant vessel self protection, and that Greece wasn't ready to sign now, but that he would look into it. Encouragingly, he asked whether the U.S. might prefer reopening the text, or accepting a Greek signature with a caveat, as the UK has done. In closing, Verros conveyed his understanding that the Greek owners of the recently pirated, Greek-flagged Maran Centaurus had not yet commenced negotiations with the pirates. END SUMMARY.

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Greece Wants to Chair a Contact Group Plenary  
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[13](#). (C) MFA D1 Director (IO/UNP Office Director equivalent) Verros conveyed to us a formal request that Greece serve as Chair for a future meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and asked that we pass the request to Washington for a response. He also asked if we had information we could share on which countries are being considered as future chairs, so that the Greeks could coordinate appropriately, and ensure that the Contact

Group ran as smoothly as possible. Verros underlined Greece's enthusiastic support of the Contact Group, and other international efforts to combat piracy; he was pleased to inform us that Greece had been elected to the Board of the International Trust Fund Supporting Initiatives of the CGPCS for 2010 along with the United States, and that Greece would donate to it, as well, although the amount was not presently decided. He stated that Greece believed the international community's response to increasingly sophisticated pirate attacks needed to become more sophisticated, as well, and said he and his team were working on ideas to present at the January 28 CGPCS plenary. (Comment: the recent spate of incidents has gotten the Greeks' attention; one Greek-flagged vessel and three other Greek-owned vessels are currently held by pirates. Economy Minister Katselis also met December 1 with the Union of Greek Shipowners to discuss the problem.) We told him we would convey that request, and would pass him a reaction from Washington. Per prior informal guidance from the PM bureau in November (ref A), we also steered them towards Norway, the Chair for the upcoming CGPCS meeting in January, who will play a prominent role in arranging the next chair.

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A Caveated Declaration Signature?  
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ATHENS 00001693 002 OF 002

14. (C) We also raised the issue of Greece signing the New York Declaration at the January CGPCS Plenary, first raised by A/S Shapiro in October (ref D) and recently reinforced by the Ambassador with Alt/FM Droutsas (ref C). Highlighting the fact that Washington felt Greece's absence from the Declaration keenly due to Greece's prominence as a shipping power, we also noted the attention the issue had received bilaterally, as evidenced by A/S Shapiro's and the Ambassador's interest. Verros stated that no staffing had been done in the MFA on the issue for some time, and that Greece was not ready to sign at the moment, but that he would look into it. Encouragingly, he asked whether the U.S. might prefer reopening the text for renegotiation (the preferred Greek route, as detailed in ref B), or accepting a Greek signature with a caveat, as the UK has done. We stated that while we did not have guidance, we believed that a caveat was preferable.

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Maran Centaurus  
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15. (C) We also asked what Greece was doing about the recently pirated Greek-flagged Maran Centaurus, an oil tanker seized November 30 carrying an estimated two million barrels of oil to New Orleans. Its crew of 28 also includes nine Greeks. Verros said the crew was safe, and that the Greek government would not negotiate, as the shipping company had the primary responsibility. He noted that negotiations between the company and pirates had not yet started.

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Action Request  
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¶6. (C) Post requests Washington guidance on Greece's request to Chair the sixth Plenary of the Contact Group, or the seventh should the sixth already be assigned. We would appreciate being able to share the names of other nations whom we understand are prospective candidates, if that information is releasable. We also request guidance on Washington's views toward Greece signing the New York Declaration with an explanatory caveat, as we understand the United Kingdom has done. If Washington is amenable to this idea, we can begin a conversation to help shape the Greek language, and push for a positive announcement at the fifth CGPCS Plenary on January 28.  
Speckhard